

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 2306

S/AR FOR AMBASSADOR ALDRICH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BB, US

SUBJ: NAVAL FACILITY NEGOTIATIONS - BARBADOS

REF: BRIDGETOWN 2244

1. FORNMIN FORDE WAS UNABLE TO KEEP MY APPOINTMENT
WITH HIM MORNING AUGUST 16 PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE ON LEAVE.
FORDE IS WINDING UP BARBADOS CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE.
I INSTEAD SAW PERMSEC SYMONDS WHO ASSURED ME
HE SPOKE WITH MINISTER'S FULL AUTHORITY.

2. SYMONDS REPEATED TO ME EARLIER TELEPHONIC REGRETS THAT
LARGE PORTIONS OF THE POSITION TAKEN BY BARBADOS DURING THE
DISCUSSIONS WITH AMBASSADOR ALDRICH WERE MADE PUBLIC. HE
REITERATED THAT PUBLICATION RESULTED FROM A TOTALLY
INADVERTENT MISTAKE. HE SAID RELEASE OF OUR OFFER AND
OF BARBADOS' REJECTION OF IT BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE
WAS NOT INTENDED TO EMBARRASS US AND THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE
WAS GREATLY CONCERNED AND MUCH REGRETTE THE INCIDENT.
SYMONDS SAID AMBASSADOR JACKMAN
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WAS BEING INSTRUCTED PERSONALLY TO CONVEY THE
ABOVE TO AMBASSADOR ALDRICH.

3. I TOLD SYMONDS THAT WHILE I REGRETTE THE LEAK IT
WAS NOW A FACT. I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT BARBADOS
CONSIDERED SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEP.

4. SYMMONDS SAID THE ENTIRE NAVFAC QUESTION WAS DISCUSSED BY THE CABINET WHICH HAS ADOPTED A POSITION ON NEXT STEPS. THIS POSITION WILL SOON BE COMMUNICATED TO US IN THE FORM OF A NOTE.

5. SPEAKING PERSONALLY I SUGGESTED THAT IN THE MIDDLE OF NEGOTIATIONS PERHAPS IT WAS BETTER NOT TO PUT POSITIONS IN WRITING. PERHAPS THE CABINET POSITION COULD BE CONVEYED ORALLY. HOWEVER, MR. SYMMONDS SAID THE GOB PREFERRED TO COMMUNICATE ITS POSITION IN WRITING.

6. AGAIN SPEAKING PERSONALLY I WONDERED IF IT WOULD NOT BE USEFUL FOR BOTH SIDES TO CONTINUE WORKING ON AN AGREED TEXT OF A NEW AGREEMENT SINCE SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THIS DIRECTION. MR. SYMMONDS SAID THAT THE KEY QUESTION WAS THE "QUANTUM" OF THE RENTAL PAYMENT. ONCE THIS WAS SATISFACTORY, EVERYTHING ELSE COULD BE EASILY RESOLVED. BARBADOS, HE SAID, CERTAINLY AND THE U.S. PROBABLY HAD NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE PERSONNEL TO INDULGE IN "ACADEMIC EXERCISES" WHICH DEPENDED ENTIRELY ON THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE U.S. RENTAL OFFER.

7. SYMMONDS SEVERAL TIMES REFERRED TO U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO BARBADOS. I OF COURSE TOLD HIM THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBJECT COULD NOT BE LINKED TO NAVFAC NEGOTIATIONS. SYMMONDS NONETHELESS SAID BARBADOS EXPECTED THAT ANY REGIONAL U.S. ASSISTANCE SHOULD CONTAIN RESOURCES UPON WHICH BARBADOS CLEARLY COULD DRAW.

8. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION SYMMONDS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANTLY BUT ALMOST CASUALLY MENTIONED THAT "ONLY A FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS" SEPARATED OUR TWO POSITIONS ON THE AMOUNT OF THE RENTAL.

9. THE OPPOSITION'S FOREIGN POLICY EXPERT TELLS ME THAT HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES WILL NOT COMMENT PUBLICLY ON THE NAVFAC NEGOTIATIONS. IN THEIR VIEW THE GOVERNMENT'S BUMBLING ON THIS ISSUE CAN BE LIKENED TO THAT OF THE CONDEMNED BUSILY ERECTING HIS OWN EXECUTION SCAFFOLD.

10. COMMENT: WE SHALL AWAIT RECEIPT OF NOTE WITH NEW GOB POSITION BEFORE MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS.
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Message Attributes

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